



City of Westminster

NEWS AND NOTES



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Residents:

The City of Westminster, with the assistance of the Carroll County Health Department, is preparing for the possibility of a pandemic outbreak of the H1N1 swine flu in the next several months. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that as much as 30% of the general population could be affected. This would represent more than 50,000 residents here in Carroll County.

The incubation period (the timeframe between acquiring the infection and becoming ill) for influenza averages just 2 days. People who become ill may begin transmitting infection to others one-half to one day prior to becoming ill. Transmission of the infection is greatest in the first two days of illness and children have been found to transmit the infection most easily.

Influenza infection rates are typically highest among school-aged children and risk of illness generally declines with age. The severity of influenza is likely to be highest in the young, middle-aged persons, as well as those with serious pre-existing medical conditions. Approximately 50% of those who become ill will seek outpatient medical care. The influenza outbreak could last 6 to 8 weeks with at least two waves of the disease likely.

Depending on the severity of the outbreak, it is possible that City services will have to be curtailed or postponed. For example, it may be necessary to close the Family Center for a period of time and eliminate fitness training sessions to help eliminate the spread of the flu. Board and Commission meetings may be postponed or cancelled and offices may be closed to the public.

We are developing a plan to cope with these possible outcomes and to ensure the health and safety of both our City employees and the general public. Up to date information on City services can be obtained by calling 410-848-9000 or by visiting our

web page at www.westminstermd.gov.

To assist you in planning your own personal strategy for dealing with a pandemic outbreak, we have identified actions and activities you can take in your own home to prevent this disease. These procedures are found on page 2.

At the same time the City is preparing for a possible influenza outbreak, we are also preparing for a reduction in revenues as a result of the State's worsening budget picture. Based on current information, the City could see reductions in State Aid to Police and Highway User Revenues in the current fiscal year which began on July 1, 2009 and will end on June 30, 2010.

We are examining our budget to determine how to accommodate this proposed reduction in revenues during the current budget year and to prepare for an even leaner fiscal year in 2011.

Also underway is the City Playground Community Building, which is on its way to being another banner project as it employs the forethought, planning, vision, and government-private partnerships I have come to expect. I applaud City employees, who continually strive to work with community partners to make Westminster a better place to work and live.

We have also seen the completion of two major capital water projects: The Cranberry Water Treatment Plant and the Medford Quarry emergency pipeline. These projects will ensure the quality of our water and its availability during a time of drought

One way that you can keep abreast of City activities is to visit our website (www.westminstermd.gov). This site was just updated in July and hosts a variety of information, not only about the City government but also about our partners, businesses, and volunteer organizations. Please visit the site on a regular basis to keep current with City happenings.

Kevin Utz,
Mayor

Helpful Tips for Minimizing Potential Flu Infection

Prior to a pandemic influenza emergency it is important that all citizens plan for and employ effective strategies to minimize their potential for infection and minimize the impact on their families. These strategies should include the following:

1. Obtaining annual flu vaccinations for all family members.
2. Frequently washing hands and using hand sanitizers.
3. Employing proper respiratory “etiquette”:
 - a. Covering coughs and sneezes
 - b. Frequent cleaning of surfaces such as telephone receivers, doorknobs, public counters, etc..
4. Strict adherence to guidance provided by public health officials.
5. Employing “Social Distancing” strategies. The strategies are intended to reduce the spread of infection and they include:
 - a. Staying away from people who appear to be ill.
 - b. Avoiding crowds and public events.
 - c. Staying at home when possible.
 - d. Canceling public events.
 - e. Closing schools.
6. “Self-Quarantine” — Elements of self-quarantine include the following:
 - a. Keep your family at home and away from people who may be infectious.
 - b. Be prepared for a period of time where customary services are not available to the public due to the spread of the flu. Those preparations should include keeping a 3 to 5 day supply of food on-hand, as well as one-gallon of water per day per family member.
 - c. Have a family “Go Kit” available in case there is a need to relocate. This “Go Kit” should contain basic necessities to include:
 - i. A 3 to 5 day supply of food and water.
 - ii. Flashlight and batteries.
 - iii. A change of clothing.
 - iv. Prescription medications for one week.
 - v. A list of physician and important medical information.
 - vi. Cell phone and charger.
 - vii. Identifications, credit cards, and cash.
 - viii. Battery powered radio and batteries.
- D. Be prepared to care for ill family members at home. This includes keeping a supply of basic medical supplies in your home and knowing how to isolate sick people in home away from other family members (i.e.: separate bedrooms and bathrooms).

Keeping these tips in mind will help minimize the potential for and the spread of infection.

Westminster Recreation and Parks Events September to November

Wednesday, September 2: American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the Westminster Family Fitness Center (11 Longwell Avenue) from 2-6pm. Please call 410-751-5501 for an appointment.

Thursday, September 3: 10am-12pm Child Car Seat Check will be held by The Carroll County Health Department at the Westminster Family Fitness Center (11 Longwell Ave). For an appointment call Maggie at 410-876-4448.



Thursday, September 24: Westminster

Fallfest Parade and Mile Run will begin at McDaniel College followed immediately by the parade. The parade will start at Dutterer Family Park on Monroe Street to Pennsylvania Avenue and will continue down Main Street ending on Longwell Avenue.

Thursday to Sunday, September 24-27: Westminster Fallfest www.westminsterfallfest.com. Come celebrate our 31st year with the whole family! Proceeds from this event benefit Carroll County Youth Services Bureau, Lions Club of Westminster, Mission of Mercy, and Rape Crisis Intervention Services. Enjoy carnival rides, live entertainment, and great food. On Saturday and Sunday enjoy over 100 craft and commercial vendors gathered for your shopping pleasure. No pets please.

Friday, September 25: Midnight Madness. Enjoy the sights, scents, and sounds of an autumn evening in downtown Historic Westminster for shopping and fun from 6pm-12am. A variety of shops will be open. Live entertainment, antique cars, and much more. No pets please.

Saturday and Sunday, September 26 & 27 American Red Cross Blood Drive: A blood drive will be held at the Westminster Fallfest on the craft vendor lot. Please call 410-751-5501 for an appointment.

Wednesday, October 14: 7-9:30 pm. Mother/Son Date and Wednesday, October 21: 7-9:30 pm. Daddy/Daughter Date. Events held at Martin's Westminster. Boys and Girls must be in K-8th. The evening includes dinner, dancing, games, door prizes, a 5x7 photo of couple, parting gifts, and much more. Tickets are non-refundable and must be prepaid. A couple is considered one adult and one child. No exceptions. \$60.00 per couple.

Tuesday, October 27th: 6 pm. Halloween Parade in Historic Downtown Westminster begins with registration on Monroe St. near Dutterer's Park. The parade begins at 7pm via Pennsylvania Avenue to Main Street and ending on Longwell Avenue. This event is coordinated by the American Legion Post #31. Call 410-857-7953 for more information.

Saturday, October 31, 2009 5th Annual (Halloween) Open Bench Press Competition

The Westminster Family Fitness Center and GNC will sponsor their 5th Annual Open Bench Press Competition at the Family Center. Powerlifters from the tri-state area compete for trophies. Proceeds benefit Access Carroll. If interested, call 410-751-5501 for details.

Wednesday, November 11: 4 pm. Veterans Day Ceremony remembers our fallen soldiers at the Westminster Armory (11 Longwell Avenue). The service is open to the public. For more information call American Legion Post #31 at 410-857-7593 or 410-876-0746

Monday to Wednesday, November 23-25: Fall Holiday Camp is offered for 6-10 year-old children over the holiday break. Crafts, games, sports, and snacks are provided. Camp will be held Monday to Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving. Registration can be for one day or all three. Cost is \$20 per day, per child with an additional \$5 per day, per child fee for before care (7-9am) and after care (4-6pm). Participants need to bring a bagged lunch and a drink. Snacks are provided. Dress your child for play and fun - we suggest old clothes. Call 410-848-9161 for more information.

Saturday, November 28: Holiday Parade, Tree Lighting, and Santa. Join the Holiday season on Main Street in Westminster! The Parade begins the event with a variety of floats starting at 6 pm. Then on Locust Lane enjoy the seasonal sounds of the Westminster Municipal Band, caroling, the awarding of the Mayors Cup, and await the arrival of Santa before the Lighting of the Christmas Tree. Holiday baked goods are available for sale with a free cup of hot chocolate. The Old Armory on Longwell offers a **Santa's Treat Event** with crafts, games, face painting, carnival rides, door prizes, and Santa! For times and more information call, 410-848-9072.

Carroll Arts Center
September through
November



Saturday, October 3: 8 pm is "April Verch" presented by Common Ground on the Hill is a Canadian fiddler-singer-dancer Her depth of repertoire ranges from bluegrass to Brazilian to Celtic, from a jaunty Canadian folk-song to a poignant contemporary ballad. Verch is a world-class fiddler, a champion Ottawa Valley stepdancer, an acclaimed composer, and a vocalist whose voice has been hailed as "absolutely captivating" by the Toronto Star. Tickets are \$19/\$17.

Friday, September 11: FLICC presents "The Visitor" at 8 pm; Rated PG-13; 108 minutes, 2008. This is an independent film that follows a college professor, who, while away, returns to find a Syrian man and his girlfriend living in his apartment. The couple has nowhere to go. Walter allows them to stay and is rewarded by learning rhythms of the African drum which rekindles his passion for life. \$6 /\$5.

Saturday, September 12: Footworks Percussive Dance Ensemble, 7 pm at the Carroll Arts Center. For decades, this dance group has delighted audiences of all ages throughout the US, Canada, UK, Japan, and Finland. They have thrilled audiences as guest artists with the London run of "Riverdance." They present a exuberant combination of live music, comedy, singing, and a dazzling array of percussive dance. \$15/\$12.

Saturday, September 19: at 9 pm and midnight. "Rocky Horror Picture Show," rated R; 100 minutes, 1975. The cast of McDaniel College's fall production of "Rocky Horror" will attend in costume to add to the festivities. Tickets are \$15 or \$20 with a goody bag chock-full of all the props you'll need to fully experience this wild cinematic phenomenon.

Friday, September 25: 8 pm. "The Rogues" is a Texas-based Renaissance festival that features bagpipe-based Celtic/world-beat sound. They've received a combined total of seven gold medals from the World Pipe Band Championships held in Scotland each year. They are a unique combination of highly polished instrumentalists who can inspire audiences to sing and dance along with their energetic shows. Tickets are \$20/\$17. Sponsored By Dr. Herb Henderson & Dr. Teresa Hanyok.

Saturday, September 26: 7 pm. "Creekside Fishing Annual Showcase" is a concert showcase featuring local and regional talent in an evening of soulful blues, bluegrass, and laid back music. Performers include Karyn Oliver, an up-an-coming singer-songwriter from Baltimore, Gary Ferguson, a talented singer, songwriter, and musician, and Galloway, a locally based group who performs classic ballads and originals. Tickets are \$20.

Friday, October 9: 8 pm FLICC presents "Lars and the Real Girl," 2007; Rated PG-13; 106 minutes. Lars is a painfully introverted and lonely guy. His family is excited to hear that he has a new female friend, but then fear for his sanity when they realize he has bought a "Real Girl" blow-up doll that he fully believes is real. A delightful story about family relationships. Tickets are \$6/\$8.

Saturday, November 7: 8 pm. Russ Barenberg presented by Common Ground on the Hill is a Grammy-nominated acoustic guitarist and composer who creates "exquisitely original" music that joyously integrates bluegrass, jazz, and American/Celtic fiddle and dance traditions. Long at the creative forefront of the acoustic music scene, Russ has collaborated with many of its finest artists, including Jerry Douglas, Edgar Meyer, Bela Fleck, Alison Krauss and most recently, legendary jazz bassist, Charlie Haden. Tickets are \$19/\$17.

Friday, November 13, 7 pm; Saturday November 14, 3 and 7 pm; Sunday, November 15, 3 pm "Romeo and Harriet" displays the talents of more than 50 teens in this musical spoof of "Romeo & Juliet," set in modern day New York City. It features the clerks of the swanky Montague's Department Store and the second-rate Capulet's Discount Mart. Romeo and Harriet, the heirs to these two retail empires, fall in love, just as Shakespeare's character did, but this musical has a happy ending! There's laughter galore as the quarrelling chorus members trade insults filled with comic wit. The production is a partnership between Carroll County Arts Council and Maryland Ensemble Theatre.

Friday, November 20: 8 pm, "Diner" 1982; Rated R; 110 minutes presented by FLICC is a nostalgic look at the 1950s through the eyes of a group of young men hanging out at their favorite Baltimore diner. Bring a canned food item for Carroll Food Sunday and get a free popcorn. Sponsored by PFG Foods.

Westminster Tree Commission

The purpose of the Westminster Tree Commission is to develop and help implement a tree program that ensures the proper care and treatment of trees and shrubs within public spaces of the City. Also, the commission provides expertise to City staff and the public regarding best management practices for tree care and management.

The committee was formed in 1983 for inventory and the Tree Commission was established in 1988. The members are appointed to three year terms by the Mayor and Common Council.

	Term Expiration
Joe Barley- chair	5/2010
Neil Ridgely	2/2012
Steve Allgeier	12/2010
Richard Wilbur	10/2011
Jay Bogash	5/2010
Roland Backhaus	4/2010

City Staff: Eric Schlitzer (City Arborist), Tim Rogers (City Planner). Meetings are scheduled as needed, and at least one per quarter is necessary. Contact: Tim Rogers trogers@westgov.com or 410-848-4628.

In a community like Westminster, in the middle of rural Carroll County, it is easy to overlook the need for trees in urban settings. It seems we are surrounded by nothing but rolling farmland and forests, so why be concerned about trees and green areas in the City? This entire newsletter could easily be dedicated to discussing the environmental benefits of urban trees, including storm water filtration and air quality benefits and a few pages can be devoted to discussing how properly placed trees can reduce heating and cooling costs in homes and businesses. An additional page can be used to discuss pavement cooling and traffic calming. Then, we can end with an exhausting list of facts regarding increased property val-

ues, revenue for businesses, the reduced carbon footprint, and increased sense of community. While these are all perfectly reasonable justifications for the value of urban trees, why not keep it simple. Observe the two pictures below and decide on which town you would rather live in:



Tree City USA

Celebrating 20 Years as a "Tree City USA"! Westminster is in elite company when it comes to showing dedication to urban trees! Since 1988, Westminster has been designated a *Tree City USA* by the Arbor Day Foundation each year. Of the 157 municipalities in Maryland, only 37 are currently designated, and only eight have been designated longer than Westminster (See <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/map.cfm> for a complete listing). Even more impressive is that in 2001 Westminster became the second city in the

Tree City USA continued from page 3

state to receive the “Sterling Award” for ten consecutive years of urban tree program growth.

To be a *Tree City USA*, a city has to demonstrate its commitment to urban trees through policy, budget, and outreach initiatives. In Westminster, the Tree Commission oversees these activities to ensure continued recertification. Recent outreach projects include:

- Helping neighbors plant 20 new street trees along West George Street
- Planting three new trees at Belle Grove Square park, replacing diseased trees
- Helping students plant trees at East and West Middle Schools; and William Winchester, Westminster, and Friendship Valley Elementary schools
- Organizing the Annual Community Forestry Workshop for area tree care professionals

To display our pride in being designated, there is a Tree City USA flag flying at City Hall, a wall full of plaques inside City Hall, and a street sign at every entrance to downtown. Feel free to contact the City if you would like to know more.

What Lays Ahead for the Tree Commission?

At the end of each year, the commission meets with City staff to discuss accomplishments from the previous year and program activities for the coming year. To wrap up 2009, the commission will be sponsoring the 17th Annual Community Forestry Workshop. Held at McDaniel College on October 8, this event offers affordable training for area tree care industry professionals. The program this year consists of sessions on safety, pruning, disease identification, proper planting techniques, and hazard tree identification.

At the end of March in 2010, the Tree Com-



mission will conduct Arbor Week activities. This is when the commission does most of its outreach, and will normally conduct a planting at a local school. Since next year's activities have not yet been planned, contact the commission if you have an idea for a planting and/or outreach project.



City Arborist Eric Schlitzer, and Tree Commissioners Jay Bogash and Steve Allgeier install a street tree on West George Street.

Also in 2010, the commission and City staff will be preparing for and starting a Public Space Tree Inventory project. The current inventory has not been updated in nearly fifteen years. This updated inventory will provide the data needed for a more efficient management program, and will likely take a year or two to complete.

If you have a suggestion or concern regarding trees in your neighborhood, or would like to learn more about the Tree Commission and the City's street tree program contact the Department of Planning at 410-848-9000, or the City Arborist's office at 410-848-9077 or visit us on the web at: www.westminstermd.gov/citygov/citygov_tree.htm.

For more information and some helpful tips on Trees, visit the following web sites:

www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programs/urban
www.arboday.org
www.fs.fed.us/ucf/
www.treelink.org/
www.naturewithin.info

